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Chair: Mr. Niang (Senegal)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Statement by the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs

1. Mr. Liu Zhenmin (Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs) said that the high-level political forum on sustainable development convened under the auspices of the General Assembly, held the previous week, had provided an opportunity to reflect on achievements and challenges. Global poverty was on the decline, and positive health outcomes, including reduced maternal and child mortality rates, lent substance to the hope for a healthy future for all. Nevertheless, slow economic growth, rising inequality and climate change were squeezing the prospects for sustainable development. If the world remained on its current trajectory, nearly 1.8 billion people would face chronic employment risks. To leave no one behind, a shift to a more inclusive and sustainable model of growth was essential.

2. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development offered opportunities to do things differently. The international community must repurpose economic growth, tame inequality, reverse environmental degradation and stop global warming. The recently issued political declaration of the high-level political forum was an urgent call to action. Unbending determination, resilience and ingenuity must be employed to overcome the challenges impeding sustainable development.

3. The Second Committee was at the forefront of United Nations work to chart a new pathway towards sustainable development, which must be shaped in relation to four mega trends. First, economic growth: long-term growth prospects were weak, amid lingering trade tensions and uncertainties. The contagion of slow growth affecting all the major economies was spreading to some developing economies, and unfolding political crises, particularly in the Middle East, were exacerbating uncertainties and trimming growth prospects. Countries had less policy space to manoeuvre and stimulate growth than during the 2008 financial crisis. In the light of such a complex picture, the greening of economic growth presented the best hope for stimulating economies and creating millions of new jobs.

4. Second, inequality, both among and within countries, posed immense challenges to achieving the 2030 Agenda. Experience had shown that inequality impeded growth and it remained stubbornly high in many developed and developing countries. By reinforcing economic uncertainties, inequality led to an

erosion of trust in institutions, including in multilateral institutions. In order to foster sustainable development the international community must begin to rebuild that trust by combating inequality in all its forms and manifestations.

5. Third, climate change, the all-encompassing mega trend, was quickly evolving into a crisis. The increasing frequency and intensity of disasters had tragic consequences; for example, small island developing States were losing some 10 per cent of their gross domestic product every year from climate-related disasters. Ecosystems were increasingly fragile, and biodiversity was rapidly declining. Climate change was also starting to trigger instability, conflict and migration, as well as exacerbating inequality. Lives and livelihoods were literally at stake.

6. Fourth, rapid technological innovation was underpinning unprecedented change, reshaping economic structures and making the unimaginable a reality. However, while new technologies could hugely benefit humankind, they also posed major threats, including the potential to destroy millions of jobs and widen the technological divide. The international community must prioritize technologies that supported sustainable development. Renewable technologies, 3-D printing, artificial intelligence and genetic engineering heralded immense hope. The Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Digital Cooperation provided a framework for strengthening cooperation and harnessing the full potential of technological breakthroughs in favour of sustainable development.

7. The challenges that the world faced and the opportunities they presented were unprecedented in scale and scope. The international community must work together to protect the planet and its people, ensuring that no one was left behind. Nationally-owned strategies were needed to maximize the interlinkages between the Sustainable Development Goals. More than ever before, there was a need for integrated and coherent social, economic and environmental policies, rooted in social justice and inclusion. The *Global Sustainable Development Report* described a way to accelerate achievement of the Goals.

8. A strengthened financing framework was needed to achieve the Goals. Participants at the high-level dialogue on financing for development, convened the previous week, had underscored that financing the Goals required not only money, but collaboration and coordination at all levels. Only around a quarter of countries had concrete financing plans for the Goals, and, with only 10 years remaining, the international community was yet to mobilize resources at the

requisite scale and speed. It had also been unable to channel resources to the people and places in greatest need. Domestic and international financing must be augmented and aligned with sustainable development priorities in order to close the financing gap.

9. The year 2019 had been a landmark in the shared journey to implement the 2030 Agenda. On 24 September, a decade of action had been launched, with the adoption of the political declaration at the high-level political forum; the high-level dialogue on financing for development had brought together new actors and provided renewed impetus to mobilize the investments needed for the Goals; and the high-level midterm review of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway had led to new measures to help small island developing States.

10. The Committee could build on those advances by taking the first steps in the new decade of action and making the most of the twenty-fifth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be held in December 2019 in Santiago, and other critical events scheduled to take place in 2020. Sustainable development was a global endeavour. The obstacles to its achievement, including rising inequality, uneven growth, climate change and fast-paced technological change, demanded a collective effort and a stronger multilateral response.

Statement by the Chair

11. **The Chair** said that the list of items allocated to the Committee had been issued as document [A/C.2/74/1](#), and informed the Committee that the members of the Bureau had agreed on a division of responsibility for the agenda items, which was reflected on the e-Delegate portal.

12. He drew attention to the guidance of the General Assembly regarding the work of the Main Committees set out in the report of the General Committee ([A/74/250](#)). Meetings would begin punctually at 10 a.m. and 3 p.m., and adjourn punctually at 1 p.m. and 6 p.m. If there were few or no speakers inscribed for a particular meeting, the meeting would be cancelled or shortened so that conference services could be reallocated. Delegations were reminded that the General Assembly had decided to continue its practice of waiving the requirement that at least one quarter of Committee members should be present in order to declare a meeting open and permit the debate to proceed.

13. The list of speakers for both the Committee's general debate and the agenda items allocated to it was open. Delegations were requested to inscribe their

names on the list as soon as possible, using the e-Delegate portal. The list of speakers for the following day would be posted on the portal on the business day before the general debate or discussion, based on the inscriptions received by 4 p.m. on that day. If a delegation was not in the room when its turn came, it would automatically be moved to the end of the list.

14. The General Assembly had decided to maintain the current time limits of seven minutes for individual Member States and 10 minutes for delegations speaking on behalf of a group of States during the general debate (five minutes and seven minutes, respectively, during debates on individual agenda items). Introductions of Secretariat reports should be limited to 10 minutes.

15. In accordance with previous decisions of the General Assembly and the Committee's established practice, explanations of vote would be limited to five minutes, delegations would be entitled to two rights of reply per agenda item, first of five and then of three minutes, and points of order would be limited to three minutes. He took it that the Committee wished to maintain those time limits.

16. *It was so decided.*

Organization of work ([A/C.2/74/1](#); [A/C.2/74/L.1](#), [A/C.2/74/L.1/Add.1](#) and [A/C.2/74/L.1/Add.1/Rev.1](#))

17. **The Chair** invited the Committee to consider the draft programme of work as contained in document [A/C.2/74/L.1](#). Recalling the guidelines adopted by the General Assembly in its decision 65/530 on improving the working methods of the Committee, he said that the Bureau would keep multiple mandatory deadlines for the submission of draft resolutions, to which the Committee would need to adhere strictly. Requests for extensions made prior to the expiration of a deadline would be considered on a case-by-case basis, bearing in mind that the Secretariat required a minimum of 48 hours to process and issue documents in all languages before their scheduled consideration.

18. Pursuant to General Assembly decision 65/530, draft resolutions should be concise, focused and action-oriented. Preambular paragraphs should be kept to a minimum and, where possible, references to the sources of the relevant language should be provided. The appointment of facilitators for informal "informal" consultations was nearly complete and a coordination meeting for facilitators would be held shortly. As was done at the seventy-third session, and in the interests of planning and predictability, the Bureau would take a coordinated approach to the convening of informal "informal" consultations on draft resolutions. Delegations were urged to do their utmost to conclude

negotiations in time in order for action on draft resolutions to be taken on the scheduled dates.

19. In line with its practice at previous sessions, the Committee would hold a joint meeting with the Economic and Social Council on 15 October 2019, entitled “Ecosystem approaches for shifting the world onto a sustainable pathway”. The Bureau proposed the following two side events: “The double bind of income poverty and time poverty: why it matters for sustainable development and policy solutions”, to be held on 17 October 2019, and “Emerging economic models and economic transformation: implications for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, to be held on 24 October. Interpretation services for those side events would be provided on an “as available” basis.

20. The general debate starting on 7 October would be preceded by a keynote address by Mr. Patrick Keys, Research Scientist, School of Global Environmental Sustainability, Colorado State University, and two speakers representing ATD (All Together in Dignity) Fourth World.

21. The target date for the conclusion of the Committee’s work was 27 November 2019, in order to allow time for the Committee’s reports to be processed and issued in time for consideration by the General Assembly before its scheduled recess. With regard to the programme budget, he drew the Committee’s attention to paragraphs 70 to 86 of the report of the General Committee (A/74/250), and in particular to paragraph 76, in which the General Committee drew attention to paragraphs 12 and 13 of decision 34/401. With regard to rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly and paragraph 13(d) of decision 34/401, the General Committee had drawn the attention of the General Assembly to the fact that, in most cases, more than 48 hours were required for the Secretary-General to review the programme budget implications of proposals before the Assembly. Furthermore, all draft resolutions with financial implications should be submitted to the Fifth Committee no later than 1 December.

22. He took it that the Committee wished to approve the organization of work as contained in document A/C.2/74/L.1.

23. *It was so decided.*

24. **The Chair** said that he took it that the Committee wished to take note of document A/C.2/74/L.1/Add.1/Rev.1, on the status of documentation.

25. *It was so decided.*

Agenda item 121: Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly

26. **The Chair** said that he wished to recall the letter dated 26 August 2019 from the Chair of the Second Committee at the seventy-third session of the General Assembly, and the attached non-paper prepared by the Bureau of the Second Committee at the seventy-third session, summarizing the Committee’s informal dialogues and resulting recommendations concerning improvements to its work. The Bureau had highlighted the following as possible areas for further deliberation: the Committee’s working methods; alignment with the 2030 Agenda; co-authorship of proposals; streamlining of agenda items and proposals; and reporting. The Bureau of the seventy-third session had also recommended that the Chair and Bureau of the seventy-fourth session build on the improvements made to the Committee’s working methods at the past three sessions; establish an informal working group on improvements to the work of the Committee to identify points of convergence and recommend practical steps to be taken by the Bureau at the seventy-fourth session; and address a letter to the Secretary-General outlining the Committee’s expectations with regard to its consideration of reports.

27. **Ms. Vissers** (Observer for the European Union), speaking on behalf of the European Union and its member States, said that the deliberations in the Second Committee had the potential to inspire focused action towards achievement of the 2030 Agenda. The high-level political forum on sustainable development convened under the auspices of the General Assembly had made it clear that the Second Committee must mainstream the 2030 Agenda into its work to enable meaningful, fact-based, future-oriented and cross-regional discussions on how best to achieve the Goals. Such discussions would strengthen the work of the Committee, and multilateralism more broadly. She welcomed the idea of an informal working group to examine the Committee’s working methods and identify gaps and overlaps. Revitalization had been under debate for several years, and it was time to move from discussion to action. Aligning the Committee’s programme of work with the 2030 Agenda and addressing duplication by other United Nations bodies and processes would facilitate the great task ahead: full implementation of the 2030 Agenda in an ambitious time frame. The European Union and its member States would fully support and constructively engage with the informal working group on improvements to the work of the Committee.

The meeting rose at 11. a.m.